Ombudsman
SASKATCHEWAN

Annual Report 2004

Ombudsman
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Provincial Ombudsman

April 2005

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Province of Saskatchewan
Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with section 30 of *The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act*, it is my privilege and duty to submit to you the thirty-second annual report of the Provincial Ombudsman for the year 2004.

It is also my honour to do so, as this is my first annual report as Saskatchewan's Ombudsman. I am humbled by the confidence shown in me by the Legislative Assembly in appointing me to the position of Ombudsman.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Fenwick
OMBUDSMAN

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Observations

Introduction

It is an honour and a privilege for me to present this, my first, annual report as Saskatchewan's Provincial Ombudsman. With only a few months behind me in the position, it would not be appropriate to begin this report with a series of grand pronouncements. I think, however, it is fair to make a few observations on the state of the office and the role it plays.

I would be remiss if I did not begin this report by recognizing the ten years of hard work and the many accomplishments of my predecessor, Barbara Tomkins. I thank her for leaving behind a well-functioning office with a proud legacy of innovation. As is the case so often with other Saskatchewan institutions, the office of Saskatchewan's Provincial Ombudsman is held in high regard by other similar institutions across Canada and North America, both for its integrity and its innovation. I know from my conversations with them that my colleagues in other Canadian jurisdictions hold Barbara in very high esteem.

As I began my tenure on October 1, 2004, I recognized very quickly that I was fortunate to have inherited a very loyal, dedicated, hard-working, and mostly long-serving staff. Despite the difficult work for which we are responsible, even the longest-serving staff members remain passionate and enthusiastic about the office and our work. As a result, it seems to me that the transition from the outgoing Provincial Ombudsman to the new has been a relatively easy one, at least for me. I want to recognize and thank the staff for that. I feel welcome.

What We Do

The role of the Provincial Ombudsman is to determine whether administrative decisions of government and its agencies are contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory, based on a mistake of law or a mistake of fact, or wrong. We use the term "fairness" to include all of those things.

Simply stated, the mandate of the Provincial Ombudsman is to promote fairness in the provision of government services and in the administration of government programs and legislation. We work to achieve this mandate principally through the exercise of four powers set out in the Act:

Investigate Public Complaints
The office receives, reviews, investigates, and, where appropriate, recommends corrective action to address complaints from members of the public.

Own Motion Investigations
On his own initiative, the Provincial Ombudsman may review, investigate, and, where appropriate, recommend corrective action respecting matters that he believes warrant investigation and/or are of public interest. These may be major investigations of systemic problems.

Alternate Case Resolution
Where appropriate, we will use non-adversarial approaches such as negotiation, mediation, and conciliation to resolve complaints.

Public Education and Communications
The office has the responsibility to engage in public education about the office and its role, and also to inform the public about how to effectively deal with government. We believe this role includes the responsibility to work with government to improve its ability to respond to public complaints when they occur, and, more importantly, to deal with the public in a fair manner so that complaints do not occur.

Kevin Fenwick
Ombudsman

"Despite the difficult work for which we are responsible, even the longest-serving staff members remain passionate and enthusiastic about the office and our work."

Observations (continued)

"I believe one must respect the history and culture of the institution, to first observe and absorb, and then to work collaboratively with our clients and our staff to determine what, if any, new directions deserve examination."

As I begin my tenure, I have been asked about the direction in which I intend to take the office. My answer has been that I did not arrive on the scene with a set agenda for change. I believe one must respect the history and culture of the institution, to first observe and absorb, and then to work collaboratively with complainants and our staff to determine what, if any, new directions deserve examination. I ask for some patience.

But, as with anyone new to a position, I also bring my own philosophy and background. I am encouraged to see that the philosophy of the office seems consistent with my own. For many years the Provincial Ombudsman has been moving away from a purely investigative model to one of doing what is appropriate to resolve issues in each particular circumstance. One size does not fit all. During the term of my predecessor, for example, two positions were created and dedicated to "Alternate Case Resolution" or "ACR." ACR commonly involves a collaborative approach to problem solving using mediation, negotiation and conciliation skills. The ACR positions were the first such dedicated positions in a Provincial Ombudsman's office in Canada. The reality, however, is that all the staff of the Provincial Ombudsman have been using these same skills for many years. This is consistent with my own philosophy as well. I believe that the "A" in ACR should stand for "Appropriate" Case Resolution and that we should be practicing its principles in every case.

There is a widely held belief that most of the complaints received by the Provincial Ombudsman result in full investigations. That is a misconception. The vast majority of complaints received do not result in full investigations. This is testament to the fact that, generally speaking, government agencies do a good job of applying policies and making decisions fairly. But it is also testament to the fact that the staff of the Provincial Ombudsman are usually successful in working through problems using negotiation and good communication rather than very detailed and time-consuming investigation. Although there will be cases that cry out for a complete and very formal investigation, just as there are cases that require a mediated intervention, many of the issues we see benefit most from a hybrid of the two.

The advantages are many. Many complainants have ongoing relationships with government. Many of them come to us with complaints on more than one occasion. Using a variety of approaches appropriate for individual circumstances allows us not just to solve problems, but also to teach problem-solving processes. Our hope is that we can leave both sides of a dispute with the tools to better deal with the same or other issues when they next arise. It is our version of the old parable "Teach a person to fish, and ..." For us it is "Teach a person to problem solve, and ..."

Where We Were in 2004

A significant number of the complaints received by the Ombudsman are about matters that are outside of our jurisdiction. In fact, we received a total of 1,460 complaints last year with respect to issues over which we did not have immediate jurisdiction. Over the past five-year period, we received an average of 1,855 out-of-jurisdiction complaints annually. The office has always taken the view that we cannot simply tell those complainants that we are not able help them. Instead, we try to put them in contact with the appropriate level of government.

Many times we also take on the role of communication coach. Complainants often bring matters to us prematurely.

Observations (continued)

before they have explored other avenues of appeal. Our jurisdiction normally begins when the complainant has exhausted all other appeals within the department or agency. Rather than simply telling them to "come back later" when those other avenues have not been exhausted, we believe it is an efficient use of resources to coach the individuals about what information the department or agency might need to properly consider their appeal.

In calendar year 2004, we received a total of 2,913 complaints that were within our jurisdiction. That is an increase of 25% from five years ago. That does not mean necessarily that government agencies are doing a poorer job of delivering service. In fact, our experience would indicate the opposite is true. Many of the departments and agencies with which we have the most contact have taken positive steps to create fairer processes for decision-making. Nevertheless, over the past five years we have received an average of 2,664 within-jurisdiction complaints annually.

We think that the increase in the number of complaints reflects a number of factors. There is a greater awareness generally by the public of our existence and the role we play. Specifically, with some complainant groups who have the greatest level of interaction with government, there is a greater awareness of our role. And there are some complainants who have a greater need for the Provincial Ombudsman because of changes in circumstances and government programs.

That is not to say that there is no room for improvement in the way government agencies deal with citizens. Of course there is room for improvement - sometimes a lot of room. We continue to note that many complaints are made not so much because of the substantive decisions made, but because of the way the decisions are made or the way they are communicated.

We know also that there is always room for improvement within our own office. We need to be diligent about - and continue to work to improve - the time it takes to process complaints. The adage that "justice delayed is justice denied" applies to our office as much as it does to the agencies we investigate.

We may need to re-examine the way we categorize the complaints we receive. We are confident that virtually every person who calls us would describe their problem as a "complaint" against a department or agency. Some of those complaints, however, are resolved reasonably quickly by the department involved, with relatively little help from us other than some phone calls and assistance in opening the lines of communication. Other complaints require a full investigation and result in a formal recommendation from the Provincial Ombudsman. We may be able to do a better job of distinguishing between and reporting which of those occupy the bulk of our time and resources. We have attempted to begin that process with this annual report by adding a narrative "executive summary" pertaining to the statistics at the end of this report.

Update: *Locked Out: A Review of Inmate Services and Conditions of Custody in Saskatchewan Correctional Centres*

The Provincial Ombudsman released *Locked Out* in November 2002. Since that time, the Ombudsman and Corrections and Public Safety have continued to work toward agreement on the report's 146 recommendations. In late 2004, the Ombudsman received a final draft of Corrections' response to the

Accolades

In this annual report, we are continuing the practice of recognizing a sampling of the many individuals in public service whose day-to-day efforts demonstrate the principles of fairness we uphold. These are the people who make our jobs easier and we want to say a public thank you. While we used to issue Kudos, we will now issue Accolades – but the meaning and our heartfelt thanks remain the same. Accolades for 2004 are scattered throughout the report.

Observations (continued)

recommendations. Corrections agreed with most of the recommendations and has taken steps to implement them. Many have already been implemented. A few recommendations were accepted with limitations and a few more were rejected. Only ten recommendations were rejected, but in most cases, Corrections responded with an alternative intended to meet the spirit of the recommendation. For example, the Ombudsman, to uphold the appearance of objectivity, recommended that discipline panels be drawn from people who were not Corrections employees. Corrections responded that given the number of correctional centres in Saskatchewan, this was not practical but they would initiate an advanced training program for the chairpersons of the panels.

It was one thing for Corrections to agree with our recommendations, but the real challenge for Corrections will come with implementation. In this regard, to ensure ongoing compliance with the recommendations, a senior official at Corrections' head office is presently conducting an audit of Corrections' institutional operations. We understand this will be an annual undertaking.

Corrections' response to our recommendations has resulted in many new initiatives designed to improve the delivery of correctional services. The most notable, although certainly not exclusively in response to our recommendations, is the commitment of the government to replace the oldest part of the Regina Correctional Centre. The Minister of Corrections and Public Safety announced in November 2004 that the 1913 section of the Regina Correctional Centre would be replaced. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2005 and finish in 2008. Other important initiatives include: amendments to many provincial polices; adoption of new practices for medical care, segregation, case management and programming; efforts to reduce the number of inmates in remand; creation of programming opportunities for remand inmates; more programming for inmates in secure areas; and a proposal to reduce violence in the centres.

Initiatives that Corrections plans to undertake in the near future include: creation of a comprehensive inmate handbook; revisions to the policy on strip searching; review of the policy on inmate property; creation of a clear definition of the role of the Health Care Review Committee; consultation with the Human Rights Commission on accommodation for disabled offenders; revision of the Suicide Prevention Policy to specify ongoing interventions for those offenders identified as being potentially suicidal; creation of a training program for discipline panel members to ensure the fair application of the Inmate Discipline Regulations; revisions to the Administration and Offender Discipline Regulations; and consultation with the Correctional Centre Elders regarding discipline and health care.

We started this project with the objective of working collaboratively with Corrections to identify areas of concern and to work together to improve the delivery of correctional services to inmates. I am very pleased to say that we reached our objective. But this is not the type of objective that one can reach and then quit. There will always be some room for improvement. I am looking forward to working with Corrections to further our common pursuit of excellence in the delivery of services to inmates.

Where Are We Going In 2005?

Awareness and Education

To assist us as we strive to improve the service we provide, in December 2004, we undertook a small survey of Saskatchewan residents. Among other things, the survey told us that those who know the least about the Provincial

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Observations (continued)

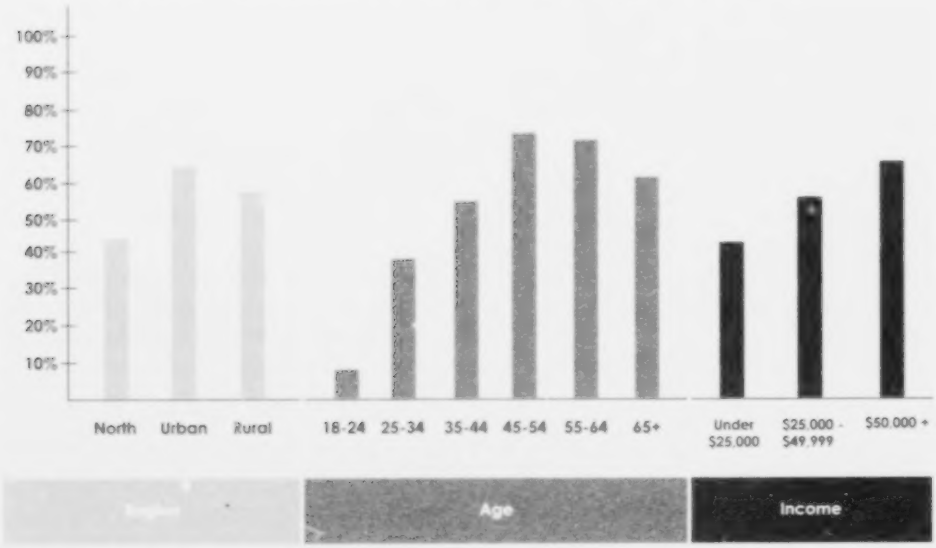
Ombudsman and what our office does, include young people, those with lower incomes, and residents of northern Saskatchewan.

Overall, the survey suggested that 61% of Saskatchewan residents were aware, at least in a general sense, that there was an Ombudsman in Saskatchewan. When asked what the Ombudsman did, however, the extent of knowledge about our jurisdiction and responsibilities was low. That should not be a surprise considering the high number of complaints we receive every year about matters that are not within our jurisdiction.

The following chart contains some of the important data gathered in the survey:

"... the results of the survey told us that those who know the least about the Provincial Ombudsman and what the office does, include young people, those with lower incomes, and residents of northern Saskatchewan."

Public Awareness of Saskatchewan Ombudsman



Clearly, we have work to do - to increase the level of awareness about our office and what we do, especially among those groups that our survey indicated know the least about us. One of our goals for 2005 is to try and increase that level of awareness.

Increasing the level of awareness about what we do, however, is not enough. Unless we are also proactive and work to increase the ability of the public and government to interact effectively, increased awareness will simply result in an increase in the number of complaints we receive. And we do not have the resources to handle any significant increase in complaints.

Interactions with Government

Our hope is to have the resources to undertake the development of a "Fairness Training" program to use within government and with the public. Our goal is to reduce the number of complaints we receive, or at least to stem the annual increase we have seen over a number of years, by helping complainants and government communicate more effectively with each other.

Observations (continued)

In a series of focus groups held in 2004, government employees identified a number of areas we could work on together to help ensure fair treatment of complainants. Many of these point to the need for further co-operation between offices and more training about the roles we play in ensuring fairness. Our sincere thanks to all who participated!

While there are areas where we can improve services by working together, we also appreciate the spirit of co-operation that exists in many offices today. Most of the departments and agencies with which we interact regularly are co-operative and respectful of the role of the Provincial Ombudsman. It is not our intention for government to feel as if it is under attack when our office makes an inquiry or commences an investigation. Our hope, in fact, would be for representatives of government to feel comfortable referring complainants to the Provincial Ombudsman if they see a need. That includes Members of the Legislative Assembly and their staff.

The Provincial Ombudsman has been given a mandate to review and investigate. In support of that mandate, we have also been given significant powers and resources. When a file is undertaken for investigation, issues are examined with great care. Investigations are time-consuming and very thorough. We interview witnesses, review a large amount of documentary evidence, and, at times, obtain additional factual information and expert opinions. We do so with an independent and impartial eye. Our focus is not just on whether a certain policy was applied fairly, but also on whether the decision complained about truly advances the goals that the policy was designed to achieve. We also provide the government organization with an opportunity to discuss frankly and respond to our findings before we reach a conclusion that might adversely affect it.

When we reach a conclusion, therefore, and make recommendations, we do not do so lightly. In our view, a recommendation from the Provincial Ombudsman is more than "just another opinion" and should be accorded great weight. We believe that, barring exceptional circumstances, our recommendations should be followed. In 2005 we will continue to press that perspective.

As we continue to work to increase the level of trust in the office with complainants and with government, it is important that "our door is open." We want to hear from the public and from government departments and agencies about how we can work together effectively to deal with complaints, and with the underlying issues that resulted in the complaints.

I note with interest the comments in my predecessor's annual report for 2003 with respect to our willingness and our capacity to undertake investigations or reviews of matters referred to the Provincial Ombudsman by the Legislative Assembly or its Committees. Our hope is that we can engender sufficient confidence in our processes that such referrals, when appropriate, will be forthcoming.

Our ability to achieve these goals in 2005 is largely dependent on the resources available to us.

Conclusions

I am looking forward to 2005, my first full year as Provincial Ombudsman. The challenges are exciting. I am fortunate to have such an experienced and dedicated staff. Although there will always be pressures, financial and otherwise, I am confident that we will be able to serve in a manner that is worthy of the confidence that has been placed in us.

Accolade

Ed Osler
Land Administrator, Prince Albert, Resource Registry Unit, Environment

Nancy Cherney
Director, Ecosystem Management Section, Environment

Hats off to Ed and Nancy for helping us uncover the facts and resolve an unfair situation.

Case Summaries

Each year, we anonymously publish some of our cases in the Annual Report. We print a sampling of these stories again this year with a few reasons in mind. First, we tell these stories because fairness matters. People want fair treatment and government agencies usually want to provide it, but there will always be some disagreements about what is fair and there will always be people who get missed by the system. These stories show what can happen. Second, we want to show examples of what we do – from investigation to recommendation, from bringing people together to bringing facts to light. Finally, we tell these stories, because we hope they will remind the people of Saskatchewan of the kinds of issues we can look into.

Intake Stories...

Our intake desk gets all kinds of requests. While some of them become full-blown investigations, others can be resolved quickly. Sometimes people come to us before checking all their options. Sometimes they feel intimidated about challenging a decision that affects them, so they skip a step and come to us. We help them get connected with the person or department who can look at their concerns.

Bringing Up Baby

This story is an example of...

... a couple who had not made an appeal because they didn't know they could. We helped them find out about their options.

The complaint involved...

Saskatchewan Learning, Income Support

Winston was attending the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). He was finishing up the course work needed to complete his diploma. He and Wendy, his common law spouse, were receiving a training allowance from the Provincial Training Allowance Program. The program recognized their relationship and paid out accordingly.

During this time, they had a baby. One month after the baby was born, Winston got a notice. It said that the program rules had changed. It would no longer recognize his relationship with Wendy because they had not been living together for a full year. His training allowance would now be calculated based on his being single.

Wendy called our office. She said she, Winston and the baby would live in poverty if the amount was calculated this way.

We called Saskatchewan Learning, Income Support. They told us that couples like Winston and Wendy, who had previously received a training allowance based on their common law status, but who had not lived common law for twelve months could appeal to the program to have their common law status recognized and get a training allowance based on it. We suggested that Wendy and Winston appeal. They did, and were successful. Now they would have adquate support while Winston finished his education.

On Again, Off Again

This story is an example of...

...someone who was getting frustrated and didn't know who to call. Sometimes we help by simply bringing the right people together.

The complaint involved...

SaskPower

Accolade

Michael Bunce
Gas Inspector, SaskPower

Rick Leeks
Service Technician, SaskEnergy

Two Crown Corporations, two roles... great team-work! Rick and Michael worked together to help resolve a complaint from a SaskEnergy customer. Both men lent their time and expertise to figure out why a complainant's energy consumption was so high.

Case Summaries (continued)

Accolade

Linda Jarrett
Area Service Manager, La Loche and Buffalo Narrows Region, Department of Community Resources & Employment

Our sincere thanks to Linda for her willingness to hear client concerns. She really listened and was committed to providing respectful and fair service.

Wes and his rural neighbors were concerned. The power in their homes was going off from one to seven hours at a time, four or five times a week. He called SaskPower to ask if there was a problem with their power line. Someone told him to call the Power Failure Line, so he tried that. The Power Failure line was a recorded message that told him when planned power outages were going to happen. Of course, his outages weren't planned, so he needed a different kind of help. He called us.

We checked with SaskPower to see who should respond to Wes' question. They directed us to the Operations Supervisor, Rural Areas. The Supervisor offered to meet with Wes to answer his question. He said he would check service logs and conduct line tests to find out what was happening so they could stop the power failures that plagued Wes and his neighbors.

Somehow Missed

This story is an example of...

...someone who had a question about an accident that happened over 20 years ago. He didn't know where to start. We helped him with his search by putting him in touch with someone who could look into his situation.

The complaint involved...

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)

When Wade was a child, his mother died in a car accident in Saskatchewan. She was a passenger and the driver was at fault. Neither Wade nor his siblings had ever received an insurance payout. Now an adult, Wade wondered why. He called us.

We contacted SGI and they looked up the laws that would have been in effect at the time of the accident. They looked up the file on the accident. Wade and his siblings were indeed eligible and the insurance money was paid out with interest.

A Simple Mistake

This story is an example of...

...a simple mistake that made a big difference to someone on a tight budget. Sometimes all it takes is to ask a government organization – in this case a Crown Corporation – to check their records. They found their error and remedied the situation immediately.

The complaint involved...

SaskTel

Wilma had $5.57 owing on her phone bill, when her service was cut off. She then paid the $5.57. On her next bill, she was charged a $30 re-connect fee. Given her payment history, Wilma didn't think this was fair. She called us.

We contacted SaskTel and they looked at their records. They found that Wilma had indeed been cut off with $5.57 owing. She also had an old debt with SaskTel, and had been faithfully making payments on it. In fact, there was only $61.00 left on the old debt and in three months, it would be gone.

SaskTel told us that the re-connect fee was a mistake. They offered to send Wilma $40 in gift certificates which she could apply to her bill. Wilma was happy to accept the offer.

Case Summaries (continued)

Investigation and Alternate Case Resolution (ACR) Stories

While some complaints can be resolved fairly quickly, others call for more in-depth work. Sometimes that means a thorough investigation. Sometimes it means that, as an independent third party, we will bring people together to help them work out a solution. We often refer to this process as Alternate Case Resolution (ACR). Many times, we use a combination of investigation and ACR work.

Digging Up the Facts

This story is an example of...
...an investigation into a complaint about applying policy fairly.

The complaint involved...
Saskatchewan Environment

Walden was in the gravel business. He knew of a gravel pit that used to belong to the Department of Highways. The pit no longer had the large quantities of gravel needed for Highways, so it was being used locally instead. Walden wanted to use the gravel too, but he was denied access to the pit. He had applied to Saskatchewan Environment for a surface lease, but had not been approved. He didn't think it was fair that other businesses could access the gravel when he couldn't.

Our office dug into the matter. We found that Saskatchewan Environment indeed manages former Highways gravel pits. They award surface leases to applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. A nearby village had been talking with Saskatchewan Environment about this particular gravel pit off and on for a while. As a result, the Saskatchewan Environment head office thought the village was first in line. They weren't. In fact, the village had never sent in an application. If the village was controlling access to the pit, their actions were premature. They had no lease and Walden's was the only application on file.

After talking with our office, the Saskatchewan Environment head office checked their records and confirmed that our findings were correct. They were quick to remedy the situation and Walden soon had his surface lease for the gravel pit.

Show Me My Money

This story is an example of...
Alternate Case Resolution. The complaint was complex. It called for us to bring all the parties together in a facilitated meeting so they could work through the issues.

The complaint involved...
Department of Community Resources and Employment, with a community service agency as trustee

Wayne and Whitney had some trouble managing their finances. As a result, they were on trusteeship: a trustee managed their funds for them. The pay cheques Wayne received for his part-time job and the Social Assistance cheques that came to Whitney were all turned over to the trustee. Then, the trustee would help them budget and give them money for specific needs, as planned. The problem was, Wayne was frustrated. He wanted access to his own money so he could spend it his way. As a result, Wayne and Whitney

Accolade

Ken Blue
Operations Manager, North Battleford, SaskEnergy

Guy Snaith
Operations Supervisor, North Battleford, SaskEnergy

Ken and Guy showed their commitment to fairness by being willing to meet with a complainant and listen to aesthetic concerns. They worked towards a resolution that respected what they heard.

Case Summaries (continued)

Accolade

Warren Miller
Sheriff Local Registrar, Judicial Centre Moose Jaw, Queen's Bench, Court Services Branch, Justice

Carol Flotre
Administrative Support, Regina Correctional Centre, Corrections & Public Safety

Terry Seidler
Team Leader, Regina Correctional Centre, Corrections & Public Safety

Margaret Pelletier
Deputy Local Registrar, Judicial Centre Regina, Queen's Bench, Court Services Branch, Justice

Many thanks to these dedicated folks who showed flexibility and ingenuity. They worked hard to make sure an inmate got access to a much-needed document before his appeal.

were not getting along well with their trustee and their social worker.

Wayne called our office and explained his situation. We called the social worker and talked to the Department of Community Resources and Employment. It became clear that, because Wayne and Whitney had managed money poorly in the past, the trusteeship was going to last for quite some time. At the same time, Wayne was becoming more frustrated and was finding ways to keep the money out of the trustee's control. Everyone involved agreed that something needed to happen.

We asked Wayne, Whitney, the social worker and the trustee to meet with us. As an independent third party, we made sure everyone had a chance to speak. Each party talked about their concerns and feelings about how the trustee relationship was going. Each party had their say about what they needed for this relationship to be cooperative. We helped ensure that Wayne and Whitney understood why they were on trusteeship and how to appeal, if they wanted to choose that route.

Next, we helped the four of them find a solution that they could all live with. Wayne and Whitney would stay on trusteeship, but Wayne would have access to $100 each month that he could spend on what he thought was important. He would also have access to a bit more if he made extra money. At the same time, he and Whitney would be open with the trustee. They would share any concerns about the budget and they would not try to hide anything from her. In six months, the four would meet again and review how things were going.

Everyone got at least part of what they wanted and left the meeting satisfied.

Counting the Days

These two stories are an example of...
... our impartiality. Because we are impartial, we look for what is fair. These two inmates had similar complaints, but the results were different for each.

The complaints involved...
Corrections and Public Safety

When you're behind bars, you count every day and every day counts. Wick and Wendell both thought so. They called us about the way their sentences were calculated.

Wick's Story
Wick had notice that his release was going to be delayed by three days. He wanted to know why, so we checked.

Inmates can often move up their release dates by taking part in programs that will reduce their risk to re-offend. Wick was doing this and was counting on those extra days he earned. He had been locked in a secure unit for a while - a unit that separates an inmate from other inmates and does not permit regular activities. He had been unable to attend any programs during that time. The result: delayed release.

Inmates are locked in secure units for a variety of reasons - sometimes because of dangerous actions on their part, sometimes because of the dangerous actions of others, and sometimes for other safety or security reasons. There was no incident record on file to show misconduct by Wick on those dates. In such cases, Corrections policy says that inmates are not to lose days for the programs they couldn't attend.

By the time the investigation ended, Wick had already been released - three days late. Corrections owned up to the mistake

Case Summaries (continued)

and, since they could not give Wick his three days back, paid him compensation instead.

Wendell's Story
Wendell thought time was added on to his sentence unfairly. In addition to other charges, he said he was sentenced to serve time for not attending court on a certain day. He said he was in court that day.

Records showed that Wendell was in court on the day he said. At that time, his case was adjourned to another date. He then failed to appear on that date, which resulted in the charge in question. He later pled guilty to all the charges, including failure to appear. If he had wished to contest that charge, he could have done so on his last scheduled court date, but did not.

We looked at all his warrants and checked the calculations. We found two errors - but not in Wendell's favour. When the sentence was added correctly, it was three days longer. Wendell had more time to serve instead of less.

What a Difference a Day Makes

This story is an example of...
...An investigation that uncovered a need for policy change.

The complaint involved...
Corrections and Public Safety

Walter was sentenced to one year in jail. After serving a portion of his sentence, he applied for placement in the Community Training Residence (CTR) program. The program is designed for low-risk offenders who are nearing the end of their sentence. They are closely supervised, but can work or take training during the day. Walter was eager to work so he could help his family pay their bills. He had a job waiting for him. The jail administrators thought Walter would do well in the program. They wanted to admit him as soon as possible, but their hands were tied – by policy.

How did the policy affect their decision? Walter was sentenced during a leap year. As a result, he was serving 366 days instead of 365. According to the policy, that extra day put him in a whole different category. It meant he would have to wait about a month longer to join the program. He didn't think that was fair and called our office.

We looked at the policy. Walter was right. If he had been sentenced in a non-leap year, he would already be eligible for the program. The policy was holding back just the sort of person it was designed to help. Corrections and Public Safety agreed with our findings. They changed the policy wording and Walter got his placement without further delay.

Out of Province Blues

This story is an example of...
... a case that needed investigation. We had to look at how vehicle coverage applies when people move from one province to another.

The complaint involved...
Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)

In the spring, Wynona graduated from high school. In July, she decided to look at work and education options in Edmonton. Her dad, Walen, loaned her a car and off she went. She stayed with friends and eventually landed a job. The job was to start on October 1, so on September 16, she drove the car home.

Accolade

John Weir
Acting Team Leader, Meadow Lake, Fisheries Field Services, Sasktchewan Environment

John gets the nod for his extraordinary effort to find a satisfactory resolution for an especially complex complaint.

Case Summaries (continued)

Accolade

Gwen Mowbray
Manager, Classification, Public Service Commission

Our sincere thanks to Gwen for many open discussions with us about the job classification process. She was interested in finding good solutions and welcomed our suggestions. Thanks Gwen!

and packed up. A few days later, she drove the car back to Alberta and moved in. On October 25, she was in an accident in Alberta and was at fault. SGI said Wynona wasn't covered because the car was not properly registered.

Walen called our office. We talked to him and to Wynona. They told us that the car registration came up for renewal on September 25. Walen was using the AutoPay option, so SGI did a courtesy renewal on the 25th. Walen had 30 days to sign the registration and pick up the plate stickers. He did this on October 18, then took them to Wynona in Edmonton. She got them about three days before the accident.

When we talked to SGI, they told us that Wynona wasn't covered because she was now living in Alberta and should have had Alberta plates. They said that, according to Alberta law, people who move from other provinces have 90 days to get Alberta plates on their vehicles. That time-frame is shortened to 30 days for people who are establishing residency and starting work. The time-frame is further shortened if the vehicle registration comes up for renewal within the 30 days. At that point, the driver must switch to Alberta plates and in Wynona's case, where she was driving her dad's car, she would also have had to put the registration in her name.

The question of proper registration hinged mainly on one thing: At what point did Wynona become an Alberta resident?

SGI based their decision on a residency questionnaire that Wynona filled out after the accident. Based strictly on the information on the form, SGI reasonably concluded that Wynona should have had Alberta plates.

But there was more to Wynona's situation than SGI had uncovered. They counted her trip in July as a move, but Wynona didn't look at it that way. She had gone with the intent of considering a move. If that was the case, she needed to prove it. She needed to show that she had returned regularly with the car. To the best of her ability, she had. She had returned home for the long weekend at the start of August. Her next trip home was planned for the long weekend at the start of September, but she had broken her hip roller blading and could not walk or drive until mid-September. She came home again with the car on September 16, and she had proof. A hairdresser's appointment book showed that Wynona had her hair done at the local salon. Another local business had a receipt copy to show that she had bought gas from them and they remembered that she had that car with her. A neighbor who came over to visit confirmed that Wynona was there with the car.

So... she didn't move in July. Her job started on October 1, and she should have had until November 1 to change plates. With this new information in hand, SGI agreed that her Saskatchewan registration was valid after all.

Let's Talk

This complaint is an example of...

... Alternate Case Resolution work. We helped two departments talk to each other so they could come to an understanding about an unusual case.

The complaint involved...

Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)

Case Summaries (continued)

Warren was in a car accident. He was badly hurt, with many broken bones and a brain injury. The brain injury resulted in memory problems for Warren. Warren filed a claim with WCB, stating that he had been on his way home from work when the accident happened.

He was on WCB benefits for four years when he brought something to their attention: he remembered that, yes, he had just left work on the day of the accident, but he was on his way to pick up his son. Since his route was not direct from work to home, WCB decided that he did not qualify for benefits and they were ended.

Warren then went to SGI for benefits, but SGI turned him down because he had been receiving benefits from WCB. Warren called our office.

We found out that, when Warren was admitted to hospital after the accident, he said that he had been on his way to pick up his son. He later had no memory of saying so. SGI said that WCB knew from the start about Warren's detour to pick up his son. They didn't think WCB should drop the case now.

In an effort to help SGI and WCB understand each other, we talked to both and took information back and forth between them. Next, we encouraged them to meet, and they did. At the meeting, WCB decided to look at Warren's case further and then decide what to do. For now, they would reinstate his benefits. As for SGI, they promised to accept Warren's application if he truly did not qualify for WCB benefits.

Systemic Investigations

In addition to investigating complaints for individuals, we sometimes look at complaints that affect a number of people. These are system-wide, or systemic concerns.

Mom, Can I Borrow the Car?

This story is an example of...

... how an investigation into a single complaint turned into a chance to look at the bigger picture and improve fairness for many.

The complaint involved...

Highway Traffic Board

When your 22-year old daughter who is living on her own calls and asks to borrow the car, what do you say? Do you say, "Show me your driver's license?" Wynn didn't. She let her daughter Willow borrow the car, no questions asked. Willow was stopped for speeding, and during the routine check, the police found that her license had expired. The car went to the impound lot and a notice went to Wynn about the car's location. Wynn applied for early release of the car but this was not granted. She disagreed with the decision and called us.

We looked at the reasons for the Highway Traffic Board's decision. There were two.

Wynn said impounding the car would cause extreme hardship. The Board disagreed. They said there was more than one vehicle in the family and public transportation was also available. We agreed with the Board on this point. Lack of access to the car was an inconvenience but not an extreme hardship.

Accolade

Nadine Johnson
Manager, Operations, Automobile Injury Appeal Commission

Our thanks to Nadine for her willingness to be open and transparent in a review of the Commission process and how they respond to complaint issues.

Case Summaries (continued)

Wynn also said she could not have "reasonably known" that Willow did not have a valid license. The Board said she should have checked. This time, we agreed with Wynn.

Wynn knew that Willow had been driving for several years. She had no reason to think that Willow's license might not be valid. Based on the Board's policy, she would have had to ask Willow "Do you have a valid license?" and even ask to see it. She would have had to do this every time Willow wanted to use the car.

We looked at an example of a court case where a car owner let a friend borrow it, only to have the friend get into an accident without a valid driver's license. When the insurer refused to provide coverage, the car owner took the case to court and won, based on his reasonable belief that his friend had a license.

We thought the same principle applied here, and took Wynn's case to the Chairperson and the Minister Responsible for the Highway Traffic Board. They agreed with our findings. Wynn got her car back and was refunded for impound fees from the date of her appeal. Then, for all the other car owners who might find themselves in a similar situation, the Board adjusted their policy. The policy now allows for car owners to lend to family members and close friends without checking for a license, as long as they have no reason for concern about that person's past driving record.

Accolade

Shawn Jacques
Manager, Customer Services, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance (SCIC)

Debbie Almasi
Customer Service Representative, SCIC

Shawn and Debbie willingly took the time to provide information about crop insurance policies and appraisal processes that affected some of our investigations.

How To Reach Us

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ombreg@ombudsman.sk.ca

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Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2H6

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Toll Free: 1-800-667-9787
Fax: (306) 933-8406
ombsktn@ombudsman.sk.ca

Presentations

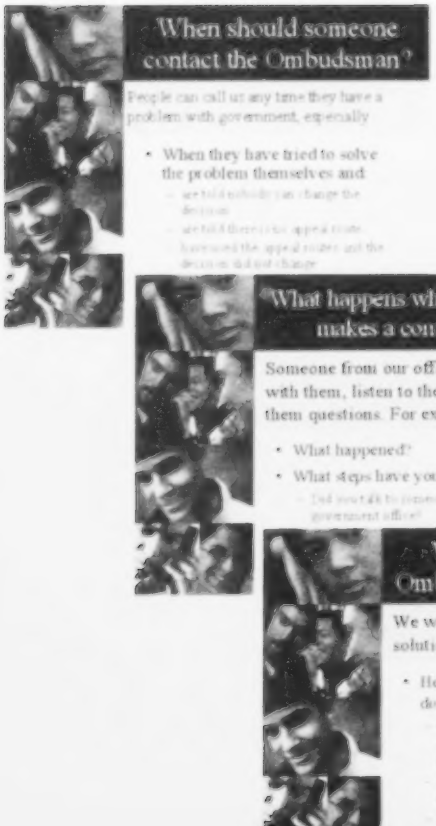
In addition to investigating complaints, we take some time each year to educate others about our office. We think it is important, not only to let people know we are here, but to help them understand what we do and how we do it. Our office has evolved over the years, from strictly doing investigative work, to looking at the area of complaints in a more holistic way. We never begrudge the effort involved in looking into a complaint and ensuring that the complainant receives a fair outcome. At the same time, we place a high value on prevention - an element we like to talk about whenever possible.

When we are making a presentation to the public, we try to give people some tools that will help them manage potentially unfair situations on their own. We encourage them to use appeal processes and record details. We encourage people to point out facts clearly and calmly so that government offices will understand and make fair decisions.

We encourage government employees to act similarly. We have found so often, that people need clear explanations about decisions that affect them. A listening ear and a willingness to talk can go a long way in helping people understand what is happening and why. Government organizations can do much in this area and we think there is a role for us in helping them prevent unfair situations. We also like to build relationships with government offices so that when they need help sorting out a complaint, employees are not afraid to refer the complainant to our office.

We have enjoyed meeting with government offices and with people throughout the province again this year, and we want to thank everyone who took the time to attend a presentation. Here are some of the groups we met with and events we attended in 2004.

- Corrections Workers Training Program at SIAST
- Inmate Committee training
- Student Legislative interns
- Community Police Board training
- Northern Justice Symposium
- Grade 12 Law classes
- Home Economics Teachers' Conference
- Practical and Applied Arts Teachers' Conference
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- AGM of Fishing Co-operatives and Saskatchewan Environment
- Department of Community Resources & Employment (DCRE) in North Battleford
- Income Security & Farm Security Division of DCRE
- Social Work class
- Human Resource Fair
- Saskatchewan Administrative Tribunals Organization
- Acquired Brain Injury work group


When should someone contact the Ombudsman?
People can call us any time they have a problem with government, especially
• When they have tried to solve the problem themselves and
What happens when someone makes a complaint?
Someone from our office will talk with them, listen to them, and ask them questions. For example:
• What happened?
• What steps have you taken so far?
What steps does the Ombudsman's office take?
We will look for ways to find a solution.
• Here are some things we may do

Accolade

Dan Doig
Operations Supervisor, Rural Areas, SaskPower

We congratulate Dan for his quick response to our referral and for working collaboratively with a neighborhood to find the source of some power failures.

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What steps does the Ombudsman's office take?

We will look for ways to find a solution.

- Here are some things we may do:

Accolade

Dan Doig
Operations Supervisor, Rural Areas, SaskPower

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Statistics

While case summaries tell the stories of certain files we have worked with, statistics tell the story of all our files as a whole. Our mandate is to help ensure that provincial government organizations - departments, agencies, boards, commissions and Crowns - treat people fairly. Statistics help us measure and report on that.

Our ability to achieve that mandate is affected by the complaints we receive that should not come to us because they are outside our scope. In 2004, we received 1,460 such complaints, compared to 2,914 that were within our jurisdiction. That means we spent a significant amount of time referring people to other offices. This points to a need for better public understanding about what our office does and a need for other complaints offices to become better known.

Complaints Received in 2004

Another measure of effectiveness is the degree to which complaints can be resolved. We do not achieve this on our own. We require the co-operation of the complainant and the government organization involved. While we have a great deal of authority when it comes to accessing information, we cannot force government to do what we think is right. That is why, as we work on files, it is important for us to build good relationships with the complainant and the organization. This approach often enables us to resolve complaints at early stages. For complainants, this means less time waiting for results. For us, it means more time to devote to files still in process.

In 2004, there were 1,767 files where we provided initial assistance in helping the complainant pursue the matter with government. While we do not know the outcome of all these files, many of them were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. A further 171 files were part of a facilitated communication process. These take time, effort and a commitment from all parties to work together to find solutions. For another 202 files, the government organization voluntarily resolved the complaint - either at the outset or during the process of an investigation. In fact, there were only 31 cases where, at the end of our investigation, we thought the complaint was substantiated, but the government organization had not yet taken action. In 19 of those cases we made formal recommendations to government, and in 14, our formal recommendations were accepted. Of the remaining files, we determined that 255 were unsubstantiated and 488 were processed in some other manner.

Of the resolved complaints, only 6.5% have had to go to all the way to the formal recommendation stage. We think this demonstrates good co-operation from government organizations and our goal is to continue to keep this number low.

While some statistics tell us how often cases are resolved, others tell us which organizations receive the most complaints. One must remember, however, that numbers alone only tell part of the story. Often, organizations with the highest complaint numbers are also the organizations that deal with the highest volumes of people, or in fields where complaints are more likely. That said, we do not discard the idea of watching where complaint volumes are coming from, but we encourage a balanced approach when interpreting the results.

What Happens to Complaints?

For the statistics to make sense, it is helpful to see what happens when a complaint comes to us.

First of all, we check to see if it should be coming to us. Some complaints are non-jurisdictional – that is, we are not able to look at them because they need to be taken elsewhere. Other complaints come to us prematurely – that is, the person hasn't tried all the options available, or maybe doesn't know about them. For example, if there is an appeal process they haven't tried, we will let them know about it and ask them to try that first. If the appeal or other process doesn't resolve the complaint, then they can come back to us and we will look at it again. In all cases, we take care to listen and to help people understand their options.

When we choose to investigate a file, we are thorough. As a result, it can take a long time to gather the information. Our process is thoughtful and careful. Some files also call for Alternate Case Resolution (ACR), which can involve bringing people together to understand each other better and to work out solutions. Many files need both investigation and some form of facilitated communication.

Because complaints tend to be unique, we do not use a cookie-cutter approach, so it is sometimes a challenge to reflect all of our activity on a file with just the numbers. In general, however, once an investigation is done, we can usually place the file into one of three categories:

- not substantiated – that is, we didn't agree with the complainant
- resolved – some kind of action was taken and the complaint was resolved
- unresolved – we agreed with the complainant (at least in part) and made formal recommendations, which were not accepted

These three categories are useful because they give an overall picture of the results of complaints we have looked at, and may be used to help us decide, as an office, where our focus should be in the coming years.

How Complaints Are Processed

Initial Support

Investigation

General Complaint Types

Assistance Rendered

Other - Process stopped. This may occur at any stage.

Not Substantiated

Unresolved

Resolved
Files may be resolved before, during or after an investigation. The government organization may have resolved them voluntarily or as the result of a formal recommendation.

Alternate Case Resolution (ACR)

Statistics - Departments

	Files Opened		Files Closed									
			How Files Were Processed in 2004				Outcomes of Files Closed in 2004					
	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Initial Support [1]	Investigations / ACR [2]	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Not Substantiated [3]	Resolved [4]	Unresolved [5]	Assistance Rendered [6]	ACR [7]	Other [8]
Agriculture, Food & Rural Revitalization												
General	12	9	6	4	10	10	3	0	0	3	0	4
Lands Branch	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Livestock Development Branch	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Community Resources & Employment												
General	13	15	9	3	12	15	1	0	0	8	1	2
Building Independence - Investing in Families	17	19	17	4	21	18	2	1	0	16	1	1
Child Day Care	3	2	2	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Child & Family Services Division	54	45	30	22	52	45	2	0	0	22	12	16
Community Living Division	5	4	3	3	6	3	0	0	0	2	2	2
Employment	4	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Housing Division												
General	15	2	9	5	14	2	1	0	0	4	1	8
Beauval Housing Authority	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buffalo Narrows Housing Authority	8	5	7	0	7	5	0	0	0	6	0	1
Canora Housing Authority	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Cumberland Housing Authority	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Duck Lake Housing Authority	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ile A La Crosse Housing Authority	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
La Loche Housing Authority	3	0	3	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	1
Lloydminster Housing Authority	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Meadow Lake Housing Authority	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Métis Housing Authority	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moose Jaw Housing Authority	1	3	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	0
Nipawin Housing Authority	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
North Battleford Housing Authority	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Prince Albert Housing Authority	3	1	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Regina Housing Authority	3	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Sandy Bay Housing Authority	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Saskatoon Housing Authority	11	11	6	3	9	10	0	0	0	6	3	0
Sedley Housing Authority	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weyburn Housing Authority	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yorkton Housing Authority	1	4	0	2	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Income Security Division	**949**	**849**	**829**	**94**	**923**	**841**	**15**	**53**	**0**	**704**	**53**	**98**

[1] **Initial Support** - We did some work on these files in the early stages but did not proceed to investigation or Alternate Case Resolution (ACR). For example, some may have been resolved voluntarily before an investigation could begin, we may have decided that some did not merit an investigation, or we may have linked the complainant to some more appropriate step - perhaps an appeal process not yet tried, an advocacy service, or an internal complaints process.

[2] **Investigations / ACR** - These files called for a full investigation, Alternate Case Resolution (ACR), or some combination of the two. A great deal of time and effort goes into looking at all sides of the complaint.

[3] **Not Substantiated** - Our investigation showed that the complainant was treated fairly. Sometimes we still make a recommendation to the government organization on these files. For example, we may find that the complaint could have been avoided if the situation had been handled differently.

[4] **Resolved** - The complaint was resolved. The government organization voluntarily resolved it at some point in our process or accepted our formal recommendation.

[5] **Unresolved** - The complaint was substantiated, but not resolved. In some cases, we made a recommendation that the government organization rejected. In other cases, there may have been no reasonable recommendation to make.

[6] **Assistance Rendered** - We provided some form of assistance. We may have told complainants about an appeal process they could try or helped them pursue their complaint in some other way.

[7] **Alternate Case Resolution (ACR)** - To resolve these cases, we needed to get people talking. We may have brought them together for face-to-face meetings, or taken information back and forth between them. The aim? Usually negotiating an agreement or restoring communications. These files may need both ACR and investigation.

[8] **Other** - We did not take on the file or the investigation stopped. It may have been improper for us to take on the file (e.g. the complaint is outside our jurisdiction, is already before the courts, etc.), or the complainant may have chosen not to continue.

Statistics - Departments

	Files Opened		Files Closed									
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	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Initial Support [1]	Investigations / ACR [2]	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Not Substantiated [3]	Resolved [4]	Unresolved [5]	Assistance Rendered [6]	ACR [7]	Other [8]
Corrections and Public Safety												
General	1	5	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	1
Adult Corrections												
General	3	3	3	2	5	2	2	0	0	3	0	0
Battlefords Community Correctional Centre	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Community Operations Branch - Probation	5	12	2	2	4	13	0	0	0	3	0	1
Community Training Residences (CTR)	9	10	9	0	9	10	0	0	0	9	0	0
Northern Region (Besnard Lake, Buffalo Narrows, Waden Bay)	4	3	3	1	4	3	0	0	0	2	1	1
Pine Grove Correctional Centre	51	58	44	7	51	58	5	5	0	36	1	4
Prince Albert Correctional Centre	152	144	120	30	150	142	15	9	1	102	4	19
Prince Albert Healing Lodge	2	4	2	0	2	5	0	0	0	2	0	0
Regina Correctional Centre	233	213	168	73	241	193	39	29	6	101	1	65
Saskatoon Correctional Centre	264	212	204	57	261	206	25	25	4	165	8	34
Protection and Emergency Services	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Young Offenders Program	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culture, Youth and Recreation												
General	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Environment												
General	13	19	12	3	15	20	1	0	0	5	1	8
Compliance, Fire & Forest Division	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Resource & Environmental Stewardship Division	2	0	0	3	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Executive Council												
General	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance												
General	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
Public Employees' Benefits Agency	4	10	2	7	9	7	7	0	0	1	0	1
Revenue Division	2	6	2	0	2	6	0	1	0	1	0	0
Government Relations												
General	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health												
General	31	24	26	4	30	27	1	0	0	18	3	8
Community Care Branch	1	7	1	2	3	7	1	0	0	1	1	0
Drug Plan & Extended Health Benefits Branch	16	13	9	6	15	11	2	1	0	8	1	3

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			How Files Were Processed in 2004				Outcomes of Files Closed in 2004					
	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Initial Support [1]	Investigations / ACR [2]	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Not Substantiated [3]	Resolved [4]	Unresolved [5]	Assistance Rendered [6]	ACR [7]	Other [8]
Highways & Transportation												
General	7	8	3	3	6	11	0	0	0	3	2	1
Highway Traffic Board	6	6	2	2	4	7	0	1	0	0	1	2
Justice												
General	9	8	6	2	8	9	0	0	0	4	2	2
Consumer Protection Branch	1	2	0	3	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
Coroner's Office	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Corporations Branch	1	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Court Services	10	10	9	1	10	12	0	0	0	6	1	3
Dispute Resolution Office	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Maintenance Enforcement Office	51	75	44	8	52	80	2	1	0	36	5	8
Public Prosecutions	3	5	3	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	3
Public Guardian & Trustee	15	12	10	5	15	10	1	1	0	7	1	5
Rentalsman / Provincial Mediation Board	31	33	18	8	26	32	3	2	2	14	2	3
Victims Services Branch	3	0	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Labour												
General	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labour Relations & Mediation	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Labour Standards Branch	10	20	8	4	12	18	2	0	0	7	2	1
Occupational Health & Safety Division	3	3	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	2	1	0
Office of the Workers' Advocate	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Learning												
General	4	0	4	0	4	5	0	1	0	2	0	1
Education	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-Secondary Education & Skills Training	3	7	2	2	4	6	2	1	0	1	0	0
Student Financial Assistance Unit	33	28	28	5	33	27	1	6	0	15	3	8
Northern Affairs												
General	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

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[2] **Investigations / ACR** - These files called for a full investigation, Alternate Case Resolution (ACR), or some combination of the two. A great deal of time and effort goes into looking at all sides of the complaint.

[3] **Not Substantiated** - Our investigation showed that the complainant was treated fairly. Sometimes we still make a recommendation to the government organization on these files. For example, we may find that the complaint could have been avoided if the situation had been handled differently.

[4] **Resolved** - The complaint was resolved. The government organization voluntarily resolved it at some point in our process or accepted our formal recommendation.

[5] **Unresolved** - The complaint was substantiated, but not resolved. In some cases, we made a recommendation that the government organization rejected. In other cases, there may have been no reasonable recommendation to make.

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[7] **Alternate Case Resolution (ACR)** - To resolve these cases, we needed to get people talking. We may have brought them together for face-to-face meetings, or taken information back and forth between them. The aim? Usually negotiating an agreement or restoring communications. These files may need both ACR and investigation.

[8] **Other** - We did not take on the file or the investigation stopped. It may have been improper for us to take on the file (e.g. the complaint is outside our jurisdiction, is already before the courts, etc.), or the complainant may have chosen not to continue.

Statistics - Boards

	Files Opened		Files Closed									
			How Files Were Processed in 2004				Outcomes of Files Closed in 2004					
	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Initial Support [1]	Investigations / ACR [2]	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Not Substantiated [3]	Resolved [4]	Unresolved [5]	Assistance Rendered [6]	ACR [7]	Other [8]
Adjudicator - Saskatchewan Employment Supplement Program	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farm Land Security Board	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Labour Relations Board	2	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Lands Appeal Board	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Rates Appeal Board	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional Health Authorities												
General	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Five Hills Regional Health Authority	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Heartland Regional Health Authority	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority	3	2	3	0	3	2	0	0	0	3	0	0
Kelsey Trail Regional Health Authority	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Prairie North Regional Health Authority	5	7	4	0	4	8	0	0	0	4	0	0
Prince Albert Parkland Regional Health Authority	3	3	2	1	3	2	0	1	0	2	0	0
Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority	6	8	3	1	4	8	0	0	0	2	0	2
Saskatoon Regional Health Authority	7	10	4	3	7	12	1	0	0	4	2	0
Sun Country Regional Health Authority	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Sunrise Regional Health Authority	4	3	3	1	4	3	0	0	0	1	1	2
Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal												
General	1	4	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	0
Saskatchewan Municipal Board												
General	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assessment Appeals Committee	0	1	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Social Services Appeal Board	22	17	2	13	15	13	9	1	1	1	1	2
Surface Rights Arbitration Board	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Workers' Compensation Board	158	243	118	57	175	217	36	3	2	108	9	17

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Statistics - Commissions

	Files Opened		Files Closed									
			How Files Were Processed in 2004				Outcomes of Files Closed in 2004					
	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Initial Support [1]	Investigations / ACR [2]	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Not Substantiated [3]	Resolved [4]	Unresolved [5]	Assistance Rendered [6]	ACR [7]	Other [8]
Automobile Injury Appeal Commission	3	1	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Public Service Commission	1	4	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission	10	10	7	14	21	9	1	11	0	2	2	5
Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission	41	49	32	7	39	49	5	2	0	24	0	8
Saskatchewan Police Commission	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Saskatchewan Securities Commission	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teachers' Superannuation Commission	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Statistics - Agencies

Apprenticeship and Trades Certification	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan Liquor & Gaming Authority												
General	3	0	3	3	6	4	1	1	0	1	1	2
Liquor, Gaming & Licensing Commission	0	5	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan Police Complaints Investigator	2	4	1	2	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	2

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Statistics - Crown Corporations

	Files Opened		Files Closed									
			How Files Were Processed in 2004				Outcomes of Files Closed in 2004					
	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Initial Support [1]	Investigations / ACR [2]	2004 Totals	2003 Totals	Not Substantiated [3]	Resolved [4]	Unresolved [5]	Assistance Rendered [6]	ACR [7]	Other [8]
Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Services Corporation	6	9	3	1	4	9	1	0	0	2	0	1
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation	11	13	4	9	13	7	5	0	0	1	4	3
Saskatchewan Development Fund Corporation	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan Government Insurance												
General	36	33	28	7	35	29	3	3	0	16	1	12
Auto Fund	33	44	27	3	30	46	3	4	0	17	0	6
Claims Division												
Auto Claim	88	108	63	28	91	101	14	9	0	51	3	14
Other Claims	30	35	20	9	29	37	5	5	0	17	0	2
Personal Injury Protection Plan	63	81	42	22	64	79	7	3	1	38	10	5
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology (SIAST)	5	4	1	1	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	1
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation	4	3	4	0	4	3	0	0	0	1	0	3
Saskatchewan Transportation Company	2	3	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
Saskatchewan Water Corporation	4	7	2	1	3	8	1	0	0	1	0	1
SaskEnergy	90	102	72	14	86	105	4	7	0	52	9	14
SaskPower	104	132	87	22	109	136	6	13	0	55	6	29
SaskTel	54	65	38	16	54	66	5	9	0	17	5	18
Totals - All Files	2,913	2,988	2,275	639	2,914	2,928	255	216	17	1,767	171	488

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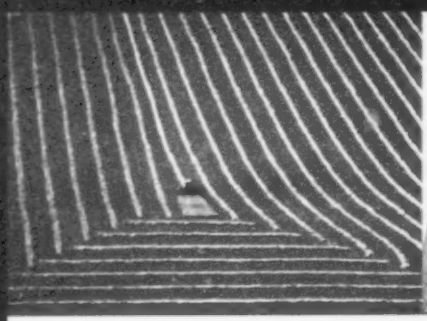
Budget

For the last several years, our approved budget has remained stable, with small increases to allow for salary adjustments and basic operations.

	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005
Salaries	$1,208,000	$1,238,000	$1,255,000
Other Expenses	$325,000	$326,000	$326,000
Total	$1,533,000	$1,564,000	$1,581,000



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